

# Green Shopping



# For Tennessee





## Green Shopping for Tennessee

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### Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership

**Tennessee's statewide network of  
households, schools, government agencies, organizations, businesses and  
industries, working together to protect our shared environment  
through pollution prevention**

**Division of Community Assistance  
1-800-734-3619  
[www.tdec.net/dca](http://www.tdec.net/dca)**

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### **Mission Statement**

**To enhance the quality of life of all  
Tennesseans and to be stewards of our  
natural environment**

**Environmental Hotline  
1-888-891-TDEC (8332)**

**[www.tdec.net](http://www.tdec.net)**



# Buy Greener

The Division of Community Assistance recognizes that all Tennesseans play an active role as consumers in the marketplace. This Green Shopping for Tennessee guide has been prepared to assist Tennessee consumers in environmentally preferable purchasing. Products are available with many different options including quality, quantity, toxicity, and biodegradability. Green answers in this guide cover topics like:

- ◆ qualities that make a durable product,
- ◆ quantities that minimize packaging waste, and
- ◆ products that naturally deteriorate in the environment.

Tennesseans can protect our environment when purchasing by changing shopping habits, doing background research, reading labels, and keeping green values in mind.

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# Automobiles



### Shopping Habits:

- **Make environmentally friendly choices** when you purchase a new vehicle. Look for low emissions and high fuel efficiency.
- **Check a consumer** guide for the year of the vehicle you are buying. This is a good source for comparative information.
- You may want to **buy a car that uses alternative fuels** such as natural gas, propane, ethanol, methanol, and/or electricity. Each of these fuels has advantages and disadvantages relative to gasoline, but all could be made from domestic energy resources, thereby reducing our nation's dependence on imported oil.
- **Purchase high mileage tires** that last longer.



### Personal Habits:


- **Properly maintain your vehicle.** An efficiently operating engine will use fuel more completely and yield better performance and gas mileage.
- **Avoid high speeds.** With every mile-per-hour over 55, the average vehicle loses almost 2% in gas mileage.
- **Properly inflated tires** will last longer and will save you money on gas.
- **Rotate and balance tires** regularly.



- **Consolidate your errands** and visits into a single trip. Make the most of your time behind the wheel. Also, try driving during off-peak, non-rush hours to spend less time on the road.
- **Carpooling reduces pollution.** Whenever possible use mass transit.



### Shopping Habits:

- **Check the yellow Energy-Guide rating label**, which gives energy efficiency and operating cost, before purchasing a large appliance. Efficient appliances reduce air pollution and help conserve natural resources.
- **Buy appliances that feature the ENERGY STAR® logo**, which indicates that the appliance is significantly more energy efficient. 
- **Shop around.** Appliance outlets, electronic stores, and local retailers carry different brands and models. Compare both purchase price and estimated energy use when deciding which brand and model to buy.
- **Ask whether financing or rebates are available** from local utilities or government agencies for the purchase of energy-efficient appliances.

## Appliances

### Personal Habits:

- **Ask questions** about appliance operation. How much water do they use? What about repair histories? What safety features do they have?
- **Move your refrigerator** if it is near the stove, dishwasher, or heat vents. Vacuum the coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup. Check the door gaskets for leaks. Defrost the freezer when more than 1/4" of ice builds up.
- **Scrape but don't pre-rinse** dishes by hand if you have a dishwasher that automatically pre-rinses.
- **Use cold water settings** for most loads of laundry. Use dryer settings that are specific for the type of clothing. Clean dryer filters after each load; vacuum out hoses and vents at least twice a year.





## Green Shopping for Tennessee

# Clothing

### Shopping Habits:

- When shopping for clothing, purchase **well-constructed garments** made from quality materials.
- **Consider** whether the garment is washable or “dry clean only.”
- **Purchase environmentally friendly clothes** colored with natural dyes.
- **Buy clothing that is manufactured from recycled materials** that might otherwise be sent to the landfill.
- **Purchase ‘retro’ clothing** from consignment and specialty shops.
- **Rent** a special outfit instead of purchasing.



Recycling five 2-liter beverage bottles can produce enough fiberfill to stuff a ski jacket.



### Personal Habits:

- **Hang laundry outside to dry.**  
The energy from the sun is free.
- About 80-85% of the energy used for washing clothes is for heating the water. Therefore, **use less water and cooler water** when doing laundry.
- If your sweater shrank or colors ran on your recently washed clothing, don't throw them out! According to Federal Trade Commission's Care Labeling Rule, if you washed the item per the manufacturer's label, you can **ask the retailer for an exchange or refund.**
- **Reuse cotton clothes** as dish cloths and rags for cleaning.
- **Donate used clothing** to family, friends and charity.



*There are 4 million tons of clothes in American landfills.*



# Grocery & Food Supplies

### Shopping Habits:

- **Avoid excessive packaging** that wastes energy, valuable material, and contributes to the waste disposal problem.
- **Buy food in concentrated forms** that save packaging waste with smaller containers.
- **Purchase products in reusable or refillable containers** instead of disposable containers.
- **Purchase in bulk** those items that you consume quickly and that have long shelf-lives.
- **Buy food that is locally grown.** Shop at the Farmer's Market or vegetable stands.
- Buy products **packaged in recyclable materials.**



### Personal Habits:

- When you do your shopping, follow the five R's:
  - ◆ **Reduce** the amount of packaging you buy and throw away;
  - ◆ **Reuse** whenever possible;
  - ◆ **Recycle** whatever possible;
  - ◆ **Reject** packaging that creates more waste;
  - ◆ **Respond** to producers to let them know how you feel.
- Consider whether you really need something before you purchase it. Planning meals and creating a list before shopping will help you **buy only what you need.**
- **Take your own bags** for shopping. If you must choose between paper or plastic, choose that which is reusable.
- **Avoid purchasing single-use items** like paper or plastic plates, cups, and utensils.
- When purchasing in bulk, be sure that you **don't buy more than you can use** before it spoils.

*Americans throw away 28 billion pounds of food waste each year.*



# Household Products

### Shopping Habits:

- **Buy durable, reusable products** for your home.
- **Purchase products made from recycled paper**, such as toilet tissue, napkins and paper towels.
- **Consider human-powered portables.** Wind them up and they're ready to use! If you must use batteries, buy rechargeable batteries.
- **Purchase compact fluorescent light bulbs** for energy savings.
- **Buy the least toxic cleaning products** for your home. Read product labels to determine if they are hazardous. Avoid products with these words: warning, danger, and poison.
- **Buy the right amount** of paint for the job. Choose the least hazardous paint, either low volatile or water-based paints.
- **Rent or borrow** equipment.

### Personal Habits:

- **Use the least hazardous product** to do the job.
- Be sure to **use and store products per instructions.**
- **Minimize** the use of chemical cleaners.
- **Use concentrates** and pump sprays.
- **Dispose** of hazardous wastes properly.
- **Reduce the need for pesticides** in your home. The best method to control pests is to clean up crumbs and spills quickly, store food in tightly sealed containers, eliminate moisture problems and leaks, keep vegetation and debris away from the foundation.




*By making purchases that are overpackaged, disposable, or of poor quality, your cash can soon end up as trash.*





## Shopping Habits:

- **Purchase recycled-content products**
- **Purchase products** that are durable, refillable, reusable, or at least recyclable.
- **Avoid single-use** disposable items.
- **Purchase office equipment that is ENERGY STAR® compliant.** 
- **Share** journals, reports, and magazine subscriptions.
- Instead of buying stationary, **use electronic mail.**
- Consider purchasing items that are made with tree-free **alternative materials.**
- **Buy plain paper** fax machines.



## Home Office

### Personal Habits:

- Make a commitment to **buy recycled-content products.** Investigate what recycled products are now available for your needs.
- **Recycle or reuse** all types of paper. Use scrap paper for notes and message pads.
- **Copy on both sides** of the paper.
- **Keep electronic files** whenever possible.
- **Recycle** electronic equipment such as TV's, VCR's, computers, and cell phones.
- **Remove your name** from subscriber lists of unwanted mail.



Americans receive more than 4 million tons of junk mail every year. To get off most national market lists, register with:  
**Direct Marketing Association's  
Mail Preference Service  
P.O. Box 9008  
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008**



# Lawn & Garden

### Shopping Habits:

- **Purchase** trees, flowers, and shrubs native to Tennessee.
- **Use non-toxic options** to treat weeds, insects, and fungi.
- **Buy natural lawn food**—like fish emulsion, feather meal and other alternative mixtures.
- **Buy plants that provide habitat or food** for wildlife such as birds and butterflies.
- **Purchase a mulching mower** with pollution controls.
- **Rent or borrow** instead of buying equipment to avoid having to purchase items that you may only use a few times.
- Before buying, **read the possible side effects** of lawn and garden chemicals.



### Personal Habits:

- Mowing less, watering less, fertilizing less, and avoiding pesticides will **make your lawn more environmentally-friendly**.
- **Pesticides pose a threat** to people, pets, and wildlife if overly used or carelessly applied.
- **Avoid mowing and watering** in the heat of the day.
- **Compost** your leaves and grass clippings. Put equal parts of brown materials (leaves, straw, twigs, and sawdust) with green materials (grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, and pulled weeds). Turning the compost will result in the pile decomposing quickly and with little odor. Do not put meat, fats, oils, dairy products or pet waste in your compost pile.



# Resources

- **Energy Guide**  
[www.energyguide.com](http://www.energyguide.com)
- **Energy Star**  
[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)
- **Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)
- **Green Seal**  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)
- **National Soy Ink Info Center**  
[www.soyink.com](http://www.soyink.com)
- **Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics**  
[www.epa.gov/p2](http://www.epa.gov/p2)
- **Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation**  
[www.tdec.net](http://www.tdec.net)
- **Tennessee Division of Community Assistance**  
[www.tdec.net/dca](http://www.tdec.net/dca)
- **Tennessee State Parks**  
[www.tnstateparks.com](http://www.tnstateparks.com)
- **United States Department of Energy**  
[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

## Symbols to Look For When Making Green Purchases

**Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership**



**(TP3)**

**8th Floor; L & C Annex  
Nashville, TN 37243-1551**

**[tp3@mail.state.tn.us](mailto:tp3@mail.state.tn.us)**

**1-800-734-3619**

# Green Shopping Tips

1. Bring your own shopping bags
2. Look for the least amount of packaging
3. Buy in bulk
4. Save reusable containers
5. Avoid disposable and individually wrapped items
6. Buy products packaged with recycled materials
7. Buy locally recyclable packaging
8. Buy repairable products
9. Buy refillable products
10. Use concentrates and pump sprays



Tennessee Department of  
Environment & Conservation  
401 Church Street  
Nashville, TN 37243

Environmental Hotline  
1-888-891-TDEC (8332)

[www.tdec.net](http://www.tdec.net)

Printed on recycled content  
paper with soy ink

## Contacts

### Division of Community Assistance (DCA)

8th Floor; L&C Tower  
401 Church Street  
Nashville, TN 37243-1533  
(615) 532-0445

### Tennessee Pollution Prevention Partnership (TP3)

8th Floor; L & C Annex  
Nashville, TN 37243-1551  
tp3@mail.state.tn.us  
1-800-734-3619

### Regional Environmental Assistance Centers (EAC)

1-888-891-TDEC (8332)

### United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Region 4  
Atlanta Federal Center  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104  
1-800-241-1754

### Center for Environmental Education

Middle Tennessee State University  
P.O. Box 60  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
(615) 904-8283

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